

# Quarterly NEWS-LETTER

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BETWEEN GEOLOGY AND HISTORY: SILVERADO SQUATTERS

*by Murray Baumgarten*

VIEWS *by* QUOIN

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

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BOOK REVIEWS

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BETWEEN GEOLOGY & HISTORY:

AN INTERPRETATION OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S

"SILVERADO SQUATTERS"

by Murray Baumgarten

THE rhythm of *The Silverado Squatters*—what Carlyle would have called the systole and diastole of its universe—emerges as a constant, widening alternation of landscape and character. Stevenson's critics have stressed his powers of landscape portrayal. In this essay I argue that the dialectic between character and landscape is the central feature of *The Silverado Squatters*. I have not referred to other critics here, but rather have presented my interpretation. For further discussion and a critical bibliography, see Lawrence Clark Powell, *California Classics*, chapter 14. All references to *The Silverado Squatters* are to Grabhorn Press, 1952. The speaker's focus is double. He moves between scene-sketching and character-study, holding in the tension of his own being the strain of relating a natural world, conceived of as continuously self-renewing, dynamic, filled with echoes of a Biblical Eden, and the changing realm of human wanderers, who take up their abode in a decaying world charged with redemptive possibil-

ity. The speaker's journeying self explores, visualizes and articulates the dialectic of this cosmos as he enacts it, in miniature, in the circle of his own private concerns, concluding his voyage of discovery in an image that suggests there is no escape from or resolution to this dialectic, for it constitutes the conditions of human life. Neither man nor nature alone suffice. Together, they establish the possibility of the phenomenal world of experience. "Under the immense spread of the starry heavens, down in a crevice of the giant mountain, these few human shapes, with their unshielded taper, made so disproportionate a figure in the eye and mind," Stevenson comments as he comes to the close of his little book. "But the more he is alone with nature, the greater man and his doings bulk in the consideration of his fellow-men," he notes, separately focusing figure and ground and then finishing the image by bringing character and landscape together in an almost cinematic fade-out: "Miles and miles away upon the opposite hilltops, if there were any hunter belated or any traveller who had lost his way, he must have stood, and watched and wondered, from the time the candle issued from the door of the assayer's office till it mounted the plank and disappeared again into the miner's dormitory." (p. 115) The mind visualizes its own activity of seeing in moving from proximate to distant vision, thereby defining the boundaries of the Napa Valley as the limits of the conscious world within which this tale of deepening consciousness, becoming ever more aware of its own constitutive and reflexive powers, unfolds.

The narrative begins thus with Mount St. Helena, "no place of pilgrimage for the summary globe-trotter" to be sure, "but to one who lives upon its sides" a focus and "centre of interest. It is the Mont Blanc of one section of the Californian Coast Range, none of

its near neighbours rising to one-half its altitude;" a height which the Shelleyan minded, romantic narrator knows will sustain his reflective flight. "Its naked peak stands nearly four thousand, five hundred feet above the sea; its sides are fringed with forest; and the soil, where it is bare, glows warm with cinnabar." (p. 7) The high mountain "scene of this little book" is in this way charmed into our existence, and with the first-person narrator we begin to share in a modest, precise, and unpretentious story. Its more profound dimensions have already been suggested in the epigraph from Cicero's *De Officiis I,xx*: *Vixerunt nonnulli in agris, delectati re sua familiari. His idem propositum fuit quad regibus, ut ne qua re agerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur: cuius proprium est sic vivere ut velis,* and is reinforced by Biblical echo in the narrative's second paragraph, when we are asked to visualize how "around the foot of that mountain the silence of nature reigns in a great measure unbroken, and the people of hill and valley go sauntering about their business as in the days before the flood." (p. 8) We journey with the nonchalant hero of the story from San Francisco, across "the contractions and expansions of that inland sea" San Francisco Bay, through South Vallejo, "still such a young place by the scale of Europe" which due to its untenable site "has already begun to be deserted for its neighbor and namesake, North Vallejo," (p. 8) casting our glance at the "sea-going, full-rigged ships . . . waiting for their cargo," (p. 9) which will take flour from California mills to the wharves of Liverpool, "homeward-bound . . . with bread . . . for England" p. 10) and then move on by railway train to Calistoga where "Mount St. Helena is not only a summit, but a frontier." (p. 11) It is as if narrator and reader have divided the waters and established earth and sky in their places; by stagecoach now we will

wander on, "cross the spurs of the mountain" (p. 11) in search of sunshine, health, meaning. Braving the perils of a primitive passage through "a land of stage-drivers and highwaymen: a land, in that sense, like England a hundred years ago," whose bold inhabitants strike large plans for metropolitan communities and imagine they can found a brave new world, we encounter the geysers and mineral springs of Calistoga, attesting to the ancient volcanic activity of Mt. St. Helena, ever-present to the watchful eye and observant mind, explore for a moment the petrified forest and dwell upon the wines of the valley growing ever better as its makers experiment with increasing skill. Here fuse the novel aspirations of the valley-dwellers with the great and antique European traditions of grape-cultivation. "In this wild spot," Stevenson comments, "I did not feel the sacredness of ancient cultivation. It was still raw, it was no Marathon, and no Johannisberg; yet the stirring sunlight, and the growing vines, and the vats and bottles in the cavern, made a pleasant music for the mind." (p. 27)

Cultivated, sophisticated, the Scottish speaker of this tale yet sympathizes with the rude pioneers. He too is seeking. When he says of their endeavors, "these are but experiments" (p. 27) he implicitly describes himself, and when he comments on the incessant changes of this world he is as well describing his own footloose existence. "All things in this new land are moving farther on: the wine-vats and the miner's blasting tools but picket for a night, like Bedouin pavilions; and to-morrow, to fresh woods! This stir of change and these perpetual echoes of the moving footfall, haunt the land. Men move eternally, still chasing Fortune; and fortune found, still wander." (p. 27) Appropriately, we encounter "The Scot Abroad," countryman of the narrator, yearning for home while going about

the penny-pinching business of seeking fortune abroad, who then gives way on this stage to "The Children of Israel," wanderers without home who like Stevenson would establish a kingdom where, by care, they could be made careless as kings in this, their new found land. Scot and Jew practice hospitality, perhaps as Stevenson says "For ye were strangers in the land of Egypt," in this world filled with antiquities, striking "the imagination as forcibly as any pyramid or feudal tower," where the remains of experiments in town-planning are, he supposes, more numerous than any "country in the world." (p. 33) On different scales, with varying degrees of success, Scot and Jew take advantage of the local inhabitants, engaging in sharp practices and hoping thereby to establish their kingdoms. Mr. Kelmar, the mercantile Hebrew tyrant of the valley, forces his hospitality on the Scottish narrator, providing him and his new bride with a domicile, an abandoned bunkhouse at the mouth of a ruined silver-mine, transportation for their belongings, and a model of how all men live in a fallen world. Tyrant and hero-narrator alike seek for an unfallen world, their worldly sophistication nurturing a concealed vision of a closed garden where they can wander spontaneously at their will, be free, and rooted. All are guilty, bearing the mark of their banishment from an ancient Eden-womb because the world has lapsed; by their sins they've helped banish paradise, and so all wander without more than momentary stay. Stevenson's ill-health parallels Kelmar's racial guilt (as seen through non-Jewish eyes); both are about a "kingly project" (p. 36), in a ruined landscape in which everyone is a squatter in hopes of eliciting that potential harmony felt in nature and, sharing in it, to possess it for his very own—a natural world envisioned through Biblically trained eyes by Scottish and Hebrew wanderer alike. The Scotsman has an

ironic smile for his own pretensions: "There were four of us squatters—myself and my wife, the King and Queen of Silverado; Sam, the Crown Prince; and Chuchu, the Grand Duke," (p. 54) underscored by the wit and gaiety of his graceful pencilled landscapes, and a certain justice in his portrait of the Jew, who "if he was unconscious of the beam in his own eye, was at least silent in the matter of his brother's mote." (p. 53)

In this way we move between landscape and character, experiencing and enacting with the narrator the imaginative strain of participating in nature as beings who grow from it and yet also tend to dominate it. The changing natural setting is described, visualized in sharp snapshot-like moments in all its majesty and divine possibilities, while the men who move in it are given to us in their histories, which are briefly sketched.

These are the stories of their movements over the face of the earth in ineffectual search of joining with its harmonies. All men are seen as squatters. The mine near which Robert Louis and Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson live becomes the focus for this human action, serving to knot many histories together in a dimly glimpsed scene of manipulation, legalistic chicanery, and grasping motive when a claim to it is jumped. Even the narrator becomes involved, dragged from his superior spectator's height to become the scribe, drawing up the new claim, the testament to possession of a piece of nature. Nothing more occurs, but that act of writing suffices for him to realize the full meaning of the human predicament. "And so the history of that mine became once more plunged in darkness, lit only by some monster pyrotechnical displays of gossip. And perhaps the most curious feature of the whole matter is this: that we should have dwelt in this quiet corner of the mountains, with not a dozen neighbours,

and yet struggled all the while, like desperate swimmers, in this sea of falsities and contradictions. Wherever a man is, there will be a lie." (p. 102) Here, the narrator has not only judged his neighbors, as well as the human race, but brought his own narrative into question. Its apparent sincerity is directly contradicted by his last statement; wherever he is to change the phrasing slightly, there too will be a lie by the very fact of his being human. In this way, Stevenson challenges his own right to judge and evaluate the actions of his fellow-men, thereby implying the ambivalent feelings that underlie his narrative. Once his standards—Victorian by birth and upbringing, Carlylean even by inclination and example—have been called into question by his radical conclusion, it follows that men's lives should not be too directly observed and analyzed: that will only evoke the web of falsities and contradictions that constitute their world and perhaps not even accurately portray it since the observer is himself a man and, therefore, a liar. Such a drastic conclusion might lead to a conclusion similar to Wittgenstein's in the *Tractatus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one should be silent," which sounds almost reasonable for philosophers and wise men but spells the end of their roles for writers who are, after all, men speaking to their fellow men and relating their experiences to them. The full weight of the question can be put quite simply: how is any relating, or relationship, any speaking or writing possible given such a view of the human condition? Stevenson poses the issue in this book and implies a resolution intrinsic to his stance, as a man, newly-minted husband, and young writer at a crucial early point in his career.

The tension central to *The Silverado Squatters* is that between geology and history, between nature and man. So long as they are thought of only as antithetical, judgment is sure and stern, and

must be in favor of geology and nature, against history and man. But the narrator's look at nature in this work is not only superficial—he does not only survey from the height—but also intense, deep, even profound.

The chapter called "The Sea-Fogs" enacts a kind of peripeteia for the narrator. Narrator and bride have been ensconced in their idyllic situation in the abandoned bunkhouse for some time, they have made themselves a home, have come to know their neighbors, and, we presume from the tone of the narration, are relating to each other as befits a newly married couple on their honeymoon, though few details of that relationship are mentioned. Then one morning sea-fogs inundate the valley; the narrator finds "those poisonous fogs" that had encouraged him to leave the coast "and climb so high among the mountains" in search of health have arrived "to besiege me in my chosen attitudes." (p. 76) To call them poisonous is to underscore his invalid's need for a protected environment, yet also to suggest, in the comment—"I had gone to bed the night before, safe in a nook of inland mountains, and had awakened in a bay upon the coast" (p. 75) and in his likening the fog to "a frozen sea" and an "opaque white ocean" that "swallowed a piece of mountain at a gulp" (p. 76)—the dangers nature poses to all men. It is as if a new flood is coming over the earth to execute God's judgment upon the evils of mankind. But the fog does subside, "the old landmarks" reappear, and the narrator can say with certainty in his voice, "This was not Noah's flood; it was but a morning spring . . ." (p. 77) The judgment of nature, a geological visitation, has not after all occurred. Instead of terror it has produced a sublime aesthetic moment. Even though the fog threatened him it "yet came so beautifully that my first thought was of welcome" (p. 76). This is part of

his growing realization of the intertwining of man and nature, geology and history, appropriate to a story of deserted towns, claim-jumping, mining, wine-growing. In effect, the narrator has come to take on some of the characteristics of this small valley and its encircling mountain, "to taste," as he says of Napa wines, "such as it is, the tang of the earth in this green valley." Like wine, this story too is "local," that is located, placed, and yet also portable, journeying. In this way all men are thought of as squatters, but the sting of the phrase, the implicit geological permanence of nature opposed to the historical transience of man implied in the word, is removed. Though these are the poles of man's existence in an absolute sense, his life is led within the confines of the phenomenal world they help to establish. Paralleling *Walden* in the attempt to simplify, *The Silverado Squatters* moves with it to a sense of man-in-nature as the crucial issue to be explored. Beginning with a sense, shared by many Western writers, that California is a new version of Eden, Stevenson moves to a complex understanding of man's banishment from this Eden. Using the Christian echoes, exploring the meanings of human wandering in many ways, Stevenson leaves the theological meanings behind, writing them out of his system, to articulate an aesthetic vision, the interplay of light and color, shade and line, in terms of which he can work out the human pleasure and delight pointed to in Cicero's phrase, with which this book begins. Thus, the book takes its place after the era of the Victorian sage and before the modern novel, arguing with and finally moving away from the moralism of the former and leaning toward the world of the latter where the very existence of absolutes that constitute the everyday world are called into question. In this way, *The Silverado Squatters* marks out its own domain of instruction and delight.



## VIEWS

WITH THIS ISSUE, it seems a good time to start what hopefully will be frequent reviews of projects currently under way in, or recently published by, local private presses; it would be helpful if printers could keep "Quoin" informed of their hopes and dreams (and realities!) so that this column can continue to comment on the wealth of fine printing and ambitious publishing emanating from this area. Although the 'big' commissions, such as the books printed for the Book Club, are the economical essentials for printers, the more experimental and ephemeral productions, often unannounced and circulated only between friends, may one day be seen as the more important contribution to cultural advancement and perhaps as more indicative of the temper of the Private Press and its influence in California (today California, tomorrow the world!).

It is therefore a fact worthy of note that a new printer-poet, under the aegis of the Greenwood Press, has printed three books in minute editions—a selection from the *Diary of Anaïs Nin*, poems by Mei Berssenbrugge, and some of her own poems under the title *Seasons*. Lucy Dines has a clear and distinctive voice that is neither trite nor wordy; it is well set off in Hunt Roman (exclusive to Greenwood) which seems a suitable face for the typographic problems posed by

poetry, and the format and presswork are both satisfactory.

From the Cranium Press comes William Everson's latest work, a long poem entitled *Tendril in the Mesh* which evokes with a desperate sincerity the agony of adoration—a theme explored by such as Donne and G. M. Hopkins. Published by Cayucos Books in a *de luxe* signed edition of 250 copies, it may one day come to be seen as a crucial landmark in Everson's poetical career; Burke's choice of Goudy Thirty makes one read slowly and is a valid alternative to Italic (*pace* Meynell) though perhaps posing as many questions as it answers.

The Greenwood Press has completed two experiments with Michael Taylor, the poet setting the type and involving himself in design and production; neither is successful in classic terms but both point a new way with old words and deserve attention. *The History of the Press* is also important, listing both what has been achieved from 1935-1972 and future works in progress—of which the most ambitious is *Phaedrus: a Dialogue* scheduled for publication by subscription in the Spring of 1974. A book about Lorenzo Torrentino, the Florentine printer who established the *Stamperia Granducale* in 1547 and who today is almost completely ignored, is also planned.

John C. Tarr, formerly of the Monotype Corporation and instrumental in the design of Times New Roman, and author of numerous books on handwriting and calligraphy, has just announced a series that he is executing himself: *Studies in Calligraphy*, to be in three parts of which the first, *Chancery Script*, is already available. Copies may be had from the author in San Leandro and are very reasonable at \$4.00.

Two final notes on different subjects. *California as an Island* is out of print and has already been listed by a reputable Los Angeles dealer at \$125.00; old, and especially newer, members should

seriously consider those few publications still available and benefit from what is too often called 'profiteering' in the rare book market by those who fail to buy at the right price! James Moran's *Printing Presses* is reviewed elsewhere in this Quarterly, as is McLean's *Victorian Book Design*: both are classics and the University of California Press is to be congratulated on its perspicacity in publishing these fine books and sending a review copy of each to the Club for the Library.

"QUOIN"

#### BOOK EXHIBITIONS

During June and July, the Club had the rare pleasure of showing a comprehensive exhibition (our first such experience) of the work of one of the truly outstanding Private Presses of our time, the Gregynog Press of Wales, 1923-1940. All of the books and ephemera were loaned from the incomparable collection of Director Norman Strouse. As expected, all items were prime examples of this remarkable Press including many unusual fine bindings created for the Press by their extraordinary book binder George Fisher.

During August, The Club again had a "repeat performance" in that for the second time, we were able to exhibit a comprehensive showing of a press—this time the work of the longest lived Private Press, the Daniel Press, 1845-1919. The exhibition was the joint showing from the collections of Director William P. Barlow Jr., and Club member Albert Sperisen. The exhibit included several unusual and rare items from the collection of Mr. Barlow—an early Frome piece and one of 18 author copies of the famed *The Garland of Rachel*, 1881. Almost all of the items had impressive provenances -

examples from the collections of Henry William Poor, John Quinn, Thomas B. Mosher, C. H. Wilkinson, Falconer Madan, etc. etc.—plus inscribed copies from the printers Dr. Henry and Mrs. Daniel and including several books bound by Mrs. Daniel with her miniated initials and decorations.

In 1953, on the occasion of the Club's 40th Anniversary, your exhibition committee mounted an exhibition of member bookplates, book-labels and marks in commemoration of the first exhibition held in the Club Rooms. This is now 20 years later and 60 years since that first exhibition, and we have had requests that the Club do an up-to-date showing of Club member marks. So then, this is an invitation to all members to send in to the Club (as soon as possible) examples of their personal bookplates, book-labels, printers marks, etc.

#### *Robert Grabhorn Memorial Exhibitions*

Early in September, the Club will sponsor a series of exhibitions in memory of the late Robert Grabhorn. The *first* will be a sampling from his notable collection in the history of printing at the S.F. Public Library, augmented with a showing of his and Oscar Lewis' Westgate Press books and ephemera. The *second* show will be at the Book Club with an exhibition of the books the Grabhorns produced for the Club. The *third* will be an extensive showing of the work of the Grabhorns in the Rare Book Room of the University of San Francisco from the recent bequest of our late Director Theodore Lilienthal. And *fourth* (and not necessarily in this order) will be an exhibition of Grabhorn ephemera including experimental leaves for *The Leaves of Grass*, the Grabhorn magnum opus, at the new Bancroft Library. All four shows will open at or about the same time and will continue through September.



DISTAFF

LOIS RATHER, *Women As Printers*. Rather Press, Oakland, California This 72-page small quarto is a fairly good index on the role the distaff side has played in printing, with some curious added comments from various authorities. Lois Rather has done a reasonably good job of research on the early history of printing and of the women in it. Although she does make a point of the widow as inheritor, and lists a surprising number, she somehow missed Ibarra whose widow carried on the tradition of this great Spanish establishment for some years—if memory serves us. But this is a small point. The value of this interestingly compiled work is I think, in the women of our time and of the role they play in this basically male occupation. Here Lois Rather has recorded some unknown facts gathered mostly from intimate correspondence with these female purveyors of ink, type and paper. She has also made use here of the UC Oral Histories, which the Club used very well in their *Printing as a Performing Art*. It is to be regretted that the pressman (the author's husband) did not think to take his press to a machine shop for repairs before setting out to print this book rather than towards the end of the run; it would have made a better-looking volume. Also it seems a pity that the footnotes are in the same type size as the body of the text.

Copies may be had through Dawson's in Los Angeles for \$10.00 plus tax where it applies.

ALBERT SPERISEN

## GIFTS

From member Barbara Land, the Club has received an unusual first printing from a brand new California Press—the Ilis Press of Walnut Creek, California, operated by a woman, June Evanoff. The book, *June's Gems*, is a collection of the printer's favorite food recipes from 18 friends. It is perhaps the most successful first book we have seen. It is completely charming in its design and expert in its printing. It is indeed the most auspicious first effort and it suggests a happy future in fine printing. In a letter, the printer tells us that she was "hooked" on printing by way of learning something about making linoleum blocks . . . that she prints on a Chandler Price 6½ x 10 and that the edition was 100 copies. The name of the Press is Swedish, a family name, and that she loves printing and "wishes she had discovered it years ago." We do too!

And Miss Land has presented the Club with another volume on the subject of stereotyping—a companion volume of the one recorded in our last issue of the Quarterly—*A New History of Stereotyping*, by Kubler. At this rate of acquisition, this small part of our growing history on the art of the printer, will be complete before too long.

And thanks to a new member, John Windle, the Club now owns a run of *The Imprint Magazine* (1913), a fine addition to our collection on the work of Stanley Morison whose first article appeared in this journal.

The Book Club, pursuant to its policy of memorialising certain deceased members, has purchased the following books for the Library:

Horblit, H.D. *One Hundred Books Famous in Science*. New York: Grolier Club,

1964. Honoring Joseph Halle Schaffner.

Tanselle, G.T. *Guide to the Study of United States Imprints*. 2 vols. Cambridge:

Harvard University Press, 1971. Honoring Edith and Mabel Coulter.

Verlyliet, H.D.L. *The Book through 5000 Years*. New York: Phaidon 1972.

Honoring Morgan Gunst.

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In the four-page obituary of Robert Grabhorn, laid in this issue of the *Quarterly News-Letter*, occurs an error for which I and not the printer must take the blame. On the last page the first word of line 17 reads "vanities." This should be "rarities." I had made a change in the copy in manuscript and so dreadful is my handwriting, though perfectly clear to me, the printers mistook the first "r" for a "v" and the second "r" for an "n."

David Magee

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Victorian Book Design and Colour Printing.* By Ruari McLean. xii, 241 pp., 16 color plates, numerous black-and-white illustrations in the text. University of California Press. \$40.00.

Originally published in 1963, this is a revised, enlarged and updated edition of what was already hailed as a classic work in its field. It is the only definitive work chronicling the extraordinary era that found its zenith in the work of Owen Jones, H. Noel Humphreys and Henry Shaw; that their books, so long ignored, are now avidly collected and fetching premium prices is due in no small measure to Mr. McLean, who communicates knowledge with ease and facility of expression and whose enthusiasm for a subject that he knows backwards is infectious without being chauvinistic. From Regency experiments with cloth bindings and Whittingham essays in Caslon Old Style, he runs the gamut of Victorian extravaganza in contents, illustrations and binding styles with, thank goodness, a comprehensive and accurate index both of authors and titles of books mentioned. The illustrations are well chosen, the color plates reasonably accurate, and the book is a delight and a boon to collector and bibliographer alike. The only reservation might be the price, but that is quickly forgotten in the pleasure of possessing a monumental and definitive history of one of the most remarkable periods of the printed book, the advent of chromolithography.

B.R.

*Printing Presses. History and Development from the Fifteenth Century to Modern Times.* By James Moran. 263 pp., 64 plates and 109 illustrations in the text. University of California Press. \$25.00.

In *The Dolphin* #3, that indispensable reference and pleasure tome, Pottinger remarks in his article on presses that the printing press had yet to have its Updike. Now it has, and with a vengeance; James Moran has written a book that is as definitive as it is enjoyable, charting the process of printing by impression of any kind through all its multiplicity of changes. It is truly comprehensive in text and illustration, though one might have liked to have seen actual photographs of pre-18th century presses rather than so many woodcut representations from books; however, the quality of the plates is excellent as is

the printing and even binding. It is an indication of the depth of this book that Moran has dealt in detail, in two appendices, with 'toy' and card presses and with proof presses; also included is an excellent bibliography, a general index and an index of presses and machines, that all aid materially to the book's use for reference quickly and easily. It is pleasant to note that four Californians are mentioned as having aided in the researches for the book: Muir Dawson, Roger Levenson, the Weather Bird Press, and Roby Wentz. In truth the book is virtually beyond criticism in scope and detail and members will no doubt benefit from the copy that is now in our Library.

B.R.

### ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

*The two classifications of membership above Regular Membership are Patron Memberships, \$100 a year, and Sustaining Memberships, \$35 a year. The following have entered the Club as Patron Members:*

<i>Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
Kirby L. Bennett	Atherton	James G. Leishman
John Howell Books	San Francisco	Warren R. Howell
Mrs. John Jay Ide	San Francisco	Gale Herrick

*The following have entered the Club as Sustaining Members:*

W. P. McKinney	New York, New York	Lewis M. Allen
Mrs. Foster E. Zaiser	San Francisco	Warren R. Howell

*The following have changed from Sustaining to Patron Membership:*

Earl C. Adams	San Marino
Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.	Oakland
Joseph M. Bransten	San Francisco
Mrs. Warren R. Howell	San Francisco
Warren R. Howell	San Francisco
David Magee	San Francisco
Albert Shumate, M.D.	San Francisco

*The following have changed from Regular to Patron Membership:*

Harry Goff	San Francisco
Mrs. David Potter	San Francisco

*The following have changed from Regular to Sustaining Membership:*

Willard A. Brown, Sr.	Chicago, Ill.
Henry H. Clifford	Pasadena
M. E. Heatherman	San Francisco
Mrs. Harold A. Wollenberg	San Francisco

*The following have been elected since the publication of the Summer News-Letter:*

<i>Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
Andrew Appello	Los Angeles	Dr. John B. Nomland
Patricia M. Augustine	Davis	Jean Stephens
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Our thanks especially to Lawton and Alfred Kennedy for contributing the printing of the insert in memory of their friend and colleague Robert Grabhorn.

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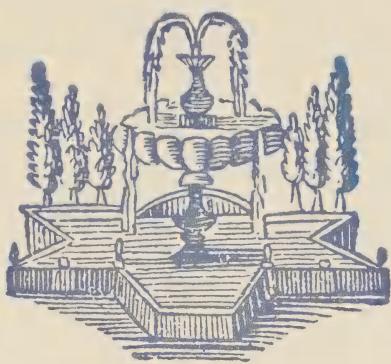
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ROBERT ARLIE GRABHORN

1900-1973



# ROBERT ARLIE GRABHORN

1900-1973

On June 14th Robert Grabhorn died. He was 73 in years, but in spirit he remained the youth I first met in 1930.

It was my good fortune to see much of Robert and his brother Edwin over the years since that first day I visited them at their printing establishment, then located on Pine Street, no great distance from the entrance to Chinatown. I cannot remember the reason for calling on them, but I do recollect a slight sense of disappointment at finding the shop so drab and cramped. It was a converted four-room apartment on the second floor of an undistinguished building. I was surprised that the magnificent *Leaves of Grass*, surely one of the great Press Books of this century, should have been conceived and born in quarters so lowly.

It is generally thought that Edwin and Robert Grabhorn arrived in San Francisco at the same time. This is incorrect. The elder brother, who died in 1968, had been printing in Seattle and Indianapolis for several years before Bob joined him in San Francisco in 1920, several months after Ed's arrival.

For over four decades it was the perfect partnership. Both agreed that whatever the cost in time and money the result must be to the satisfaction of both craftsmen. An example of this dedication to an ideal is to be found in the printing of the aforementioned *Leaves of Grass*. About a third of the book had been set in Lutetia, a type the brothers approved of and employed extensively. Yet somehow it wasn't right for Walt Whitman's book. So without a thought of the cost of months of labor they tore it down and started again with Goudy New Style. The same striving for perfection governed the illustrations. Should they be in color or black and white, should they be merely head and tail pieces or full page pictures? Valenti Angelo did literally hundreds of drawings, initials, borders, etc., before Ed and Bob were satisfied that the right kind of illustration for *Leaves of Grass* was a simple line woodcut.

The division of labor between the two brothers was worked out most equitably. Edwin was the pressman and Bob the compositor. I never saw

Robert feed the press and it was only on very rare occasions that I caught Ed with a stick of type in his hands. When it came to the design of a book they worked together. Bob would set up a page, show it to Ed and they would discuss it, criticize it and more often than not throw it out and start again. There was hardly ever any dissension. Great printers as they were, singly they never succeeded as well as when they worked as a team. They needed each other to create that most desirable thing—the perfect harmony of paper and type.

So much has been written about the Grabhorn Press, the two famous brothers and their productions, that I would like to mention here a side of Robert Grabhorn not so well known to the general public—what you might call Bob's private life as it related to books. He was an impassioned collector of typographical works and possessed one of the most important collections of this kind ever formed by an individual. Towards the end of his life his library became almost a burden, certainly a constant worry. There was the danger of fire for one thing, and then he possessed so many vanities the chance of his finding a book he did not already have that was within his purse, was slim indeed. So it was arranged that the San Francisco Public Library, through the efforts of the Friends of the Library, should acquire the collection. This was effected in 1965. From time to time a book might occur for sale that was not in the collection. When possible Bob bought it and presented it to the Library. His interest in his books, though he no longer possessed them, remained constant until the day he died. Indeed, he was planning to prepare a show of significant items to be displayed later this year at the Civic Center. I hope this will materialize. I cannot imagine a more fitting memorial to one of San Francisco's most distinguished and beloved citizens.

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